

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING STUDY COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting August 19, 2013

Location: Williamstown Town Hall, Third Floor

Meeting called to order at 5:06PM

Attendance:

Dan Gendron
Andy Hogeland
Ann McCallum
Scott McGowan
John Notsley

Andy Hogeland moved, and John Notsley seconded, the approval of the minutes for the July 29, 2013 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee discussed the space concerning a new building for Village Ambulance Service (VAS.) In a preceding e-mail, VAS General Manager Shawn Godfrey stated he can e-mail the information at a later date or have the information prepared for the next scheduled meeting of the PSBSC as he was unable to attend August 19, ²⁰¹³ meeting.

John Notsley updated the committee on 3 points regarding the Williamstown Fire District's progress regarding the Lehovic property:

- 1) John stated the "21E" study was complete and the property was cleared of any environmental concerns.
- 2) John informed the committee that Guntlow and Associates Inc. is currently performing the Topographical study and the results are forthcoming.
- 3) John spoke with the McGuire Group regarding the topographical study. Once complete, the findings will be forwarded to McGuire who will submit a report regarding how much fill will be needed at the Lehovic site concerning the designated floodplains.

The committee discussed the water storage area and what lawfully needs to be filled, specifically at the Lahovic site. Discussion was held that a 500 year floodplain does not require fill, however, a 100 year floodplain would activate this requirement. Conformation with Inspections Services will be sought prior to the next scheduled meeting of the PSBSC.

The committee continued previous discussions regarding the feasibility of combining multiple public safety agencies into a combined facility. Scott McGowan reminded the committee the current Police Station design created by Chief of Police Kyle J. Johnson, was only a draft based on the departments minimal needs and should not be used as a definite blueprint as the size of the building could easily increase once examined by an architect. Andy Hogeland expressed his skepticism about any potential lot being able to accommodate more than two agencies.

Andy Hogeland led a discussion regarding RFP's with an eye towards a fast track approach at a reduced cost to the Town. Andy stated he would draft language for the RFP and meet with Williamstown Town Manager Peter Fohlin to complete the request. Once completed, Andy will submit the document to the committee at the next scheduled meeting of the PSBSC.

The committee discussed a public outreach program to assist with educating residents concerning the needs for new public safety facilities. No particular approach was submitted, but all committee members agreed this will be an important strategy to move these projects forward. A number of ideas mentioned were:

- Creation of a Police Union website.
- Utilizing the already established Town of Williamstown website.
- Appearances on local television.

The committee discussed the McClelland / Klem properties on North Street as a potential site for a combined public safety complex. Ann McCallum presented a design that would accommodate a Police & Fire combined building if the Clark Art property (101 North Street) along with McClelland & Klem (103 North Street) was all purchased together. Scott McGowan expressed concerns about a Fire Station being included at any of those sites based on the North Street road design. This unease was also reaffirmed by John Notsley; however, Ann McCallum did not believe a Fire Station would create a significant traffic safety concern.

With regards to the discussion of fire engines safely exiting the North Street properties, Scott McGowan who is a certified motor vehicle crash investigator, will conduct a roadway study with special attention to time & distance formulas and submit these findings at the next scheduled meeting of the PSBSC.

Dan Gendron reiterated his opinion that any public safety building occupying an already constructed commercial property on Main Street is fiscally irresponsible for the Town. Dan was concerned about a shrinking tax base and felt alternative sites away from Main Street should be pursued. Scott McGowan recognized Dan's concern as valid; nevertheless, stated the committee requires unarguable data from a sanctioned study to properly examine any specific site for a final recommendation by the PSBSC, which will ultimately be decided by the voters of Williamstown.

The committee held further discussions regarding the already identified prospective sites. These members therefore opine the following:

- The members agreed the Clark Art parking lot, 101 North Street, would be an excellent site for a Police Station only.
- Ann McCallum believes the former Williamstown Financial Center property would accommodate a Police / Fire combination building while John Notsley disagreed
- Dan Gendron inquired of John Notsley if the Williamstown Fire District would slow their plans to purchase the Lehovic property in order for the Town to study the possibility of building a combined public safety complex. John expressed a serious concern that any delay on the Fire Districts part to move forward with purchasing the Lehovic site could jeopardize the transaction. John reminded the committee the Williamstown Fire District publicly began exploring a new Fire Station in 2006, however, the government of the Town of Williamstown never once asked the Fire District to explore a joint venture until 2013.
- Ann McCallum believes the former Williamstown Financial Center would need to be completely re-built to serve as a new Police Station. Ann also believed the present building was three times larger than what is needed for the Williamstown Police.

The committee then approved sites to be considered for the impending RFP while also eliminating sites for consideration. During this conversation, Andy Hogeland stated the sites that could reasonably serve as future locations of public safety buildings should only be considered by the PSBSC in favor of recommendation for a professional study only, versus actually vetting the sites. Andy affirmed this approach will avoid introducing any predetermined biases of a particular site before they are professionally examined. The members agreed with this view.

The following sites were approved or rejected:

REJECTED FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1) Main & North Street corner lot originally recommended by Town Manager Peter Fohlin.
- 2) Former DPW Garage located at 59 Water Street
- 3) Former Dave's Auto located at 610 North Hoosac Road
- 4) Existing Town Hall located at 31 North Street

ACCEPETD FOR CONSIDERATION:

- 1) Clark Art parking lot located at 101 North Street
- 2) McClelland / Klem property located at 103 North Street
- 3) Harsch Associates located on Main Street

4) Former Williamstown Financial Center located at 296 Main Street

5) Lahovic property located on Main Street

The committee discussed a date for the next meeting which was scheduled for September 10, 2013 at 5:00PM on the Third Floor of Town Hall

At 6:25PM, Ann McCallum moved, and Andy Hogeland seconded, that we adjourn and the motion passed unanimously.

